

Minutes
State Board of Education Study Session
Monday, May 17, 2004

The Arizona State Board of Education held its Study Session at the Arizona Department of Education, Central Phoenix office, 2005 North Central, Phoenix, AZ. The meeting was called to order at 9:15AM.

Members Present

Ms. Nadine Mathis-Basha, President
Dr. Matthew Diethelm, Vice President
Ms. Armida Bittner
Ms. JoAnne Hilde
Ms. Evangelina “Conkie” Hoover
Superintendent Tom Horne
Ms. Joanne Kramer
Dr. John Pedicone

Members Absent

Dr. Michael Crow

Board Business

Pledge of Allegiance, moment of silence and roll call.

Ms. Basha welcomed participants and observers stating that the Board periodically holds Study Sessions to explore important issues with the Arizona Department of Education.

- A. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF STATE INTERVENTION INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:
 - 1. Presentation and discussion of the AZ LEARNS statute (A.R.S. §15-241) regarding the designation of schools in their third year of an underperforming classification, schools failing to meet academic standards and the State Board responsibility for determining school management of schools failing to meet academic standards.
 - 2. Presentation and discussion of the AZ LEARNS school intervention strategies to date, including the Solutions Teams process.
 - 3. Presentation and discussion of the findings of the Solutions Teams, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Findings from the School Improvement Unit
 - b. Findings from the Best Practices Unit
 - c. School responses to Solutions Teams Process and Activities
 - 4. Presentation and discussion regarding research from other states on intervention policies and practices.
 - 5. Presentation and discussion of state intervention study committee activities.
 - 6. Presentation and discussion of possible state intervention timelines.
 - 7. Presentation and discussion of possible state intervention management frameworks, including discussion of:
 - a. possible evaluation elements in determining the degree of state intervention (low, moderate and high intensities)
 - b. possible types of state interventions
 - c. capacity for internal school accountability upon completion of intervention process

Dr. Donna Lewis, Associate Superintendent for Accountability, Arizona Department of Education, spoke regarding the scope of State Intervention under A.R.S. §15-241. (Please see materials packet, which includes a copy of the above statute and a draft of the State Intervention for School Effectiveness flow chart)

Dr. Lewis honored the Arizona State Board of Education for its support of underperforming schools. Dr. Lewis shared background as to how the laws have been changed, modified or amended, described the important framework provided for schools by the Arizona Department of Education in anticipation of and to hopefully prevent a third year of underperforming status. Dr. Lewis explained where they are in the development of an evaluation tool and the timelines and types of state intervention to be considered as the year unfolds.

Mr. Dale Parcell, Deputy Associate Superintendent for School Improvement, Arizona Department of Education, presented a follow-up to Solutions Teams information that was presented to the State Board of Education in February 2004. In Arizona, they are working with two major pieces to the accountability puzzle: The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), under which the primary determination is whether or not the school met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and AZ LEARNS, which has a progression of labels for schools identified at various levels of achievement. (Please see the materials packet, which includes a PowerPoint presentation, ASSIST Proposal and an Update on AZ LEARNS and NCLB)

Ms. Dena Epstein, Assistant Attorney General, further detailed the statutory requirements and the process to be followed by the Arizona Department of Education when a school has been underperforming for three years.

- District Schools:

The Arizona Department of Education goes to the school site to confirm classification data, review the implementation of a school improvement plan and may also include an evaluation of the alignment of the curriculum with academic standards and teacher training.

Three possible outcomes may occur after the site visit, which are:

- No action necessary and the school may be reclassified as performing;
- School governing board continues to supervise and retain authority over the operations of the school as it continues in the school improvement plan;
- The Arizona Department of Education suggests a public hearing be held as set forth in A.R.S. §15-241, subsection V, and asks the State Board of Education to consider an alternative operation plan. If a hearing is recommended, the State Board of Education shall hold a public hearing, much like the public hearings a district might hold to adopt a budget, for example. In the public hearing a governmental, nonprofit or private organization may submit applications to the State Board to fully or partially manage the school.

Ms. Epstein further clarified that the statute does not say that the board determines whether another organization should manage the entire district, but rather the language is focused on full or partial operations of an individual school. The board shall determine if and to what extent the local governing board will participate in the operation of the school including personnel matters or whether the local governing board shall have no authority or participation in the operation of the school or personnel matters. Statute also provides authority to the State Board to determine whether to allow another entity other than the local district governing board to make determinations regarding the school staff, the development of a school improvement plan and an adjusted timeframe for the operation of the school. If the State Board makes all or some of these determinations, the Board may then decide to accept applications from different entities to manage or operate a school in whatever capacity the Board sets forth. In subsection X, the resource allocation is delineated as to how these services will be paid. The State Board has the power to adjust the district budget and essentially assume control over the state aid that would go to the district for that school to pay for the other entity that has taken over the management of the school. The State Board then determines the timeline for improvement and periodically reviews the status of the school at the Board's discretion. Ultimately, whatever operations have been taken from the district governing board will at some point be returned to the district governing board as determined by the State Board.

- Charter Schools:

After being designated as underperforming for three years in a row, the school will be evaluated by the Arizona Department of Education and possibly classified as performing. If not classified as performing, the Arizona Department of Education is required to go to the sponsoring entity, which has two options:

 - Take action to restore the school to acceptable performance;
 - Revoke the charter. While the State Board retains oversight over this process, the sponsor must revoke the charter.

Dr. Pedicone asked if all revenues are contained within the school district budget, must the expenses for the school improvement plan come from those revenues?

Ms. Epstein responded that this is what the statute states.

Dr. Pedicone asked if employees of the district would have to be removed and distributed someplace else or is there a system to relieve those folks from the system?

Ms. Epstein stated that the Board-authorized entity has the authority to make those decisions and operational issues for how this is constructed in a way to minimize the potential impact are operational issues that have to be fleshed out.

Dr. Pedicone asked if there are any procedures to help mitigate some of these concerns and/or steps that can be taken by the district to make this easier?

Ms. Epstein stated that statute does not provide answers to these questions, but staff and counsel can work on these issues as they occur.

Dr. Pedicone asked, hypothetically, what happens if a private company is hired to come in and do the work, after a period of time they are reviewed, and they are not successful? Does the same process happen again or does the State Board look at what has happened and continue the process?

Ms. Epstein responded that the Board has the authority to periodically review the status, so in this circumstance the contract and terms could be looked at, an evaluation made, and possible modifications made to the plan based on circumstances.

Dr. Pedicone asked if this continues until a school gets remediated?

Ms. Epstein explained that statute does not provide clear parameters or timeframes as to when this ends. It is up to the discretion of the State Board. It is clear that it is supposed to end and that at some point the State Board would make the determination to return those schools to their local governing board.

Dr. Pedicone asked what happens after the remediation is accomplished and the State Board is ready to return the school back to the district if the district doesn't want the school?

Ms. Epstein stated there is not a mechanism in statute that states a local governing board can veto the State Board's decision when it is appropriate to send the school back to the local district.

Ms. Hoover asked if a school continues to fail and another entity is granted a contract to try to improve that school, is there a timeframe for that unless there is specific wording in the contract? Is this at the discretion of the State Board?

Ms. Epstein stated the statute does not set forth a timeframe but does require the State Board when adopting an alternative operation plan to set forth a suggested timeframe and to review the status.

Ms. Hoover asked if the school continues to fail, is there an effort to continue to find an organization that will be able to improve that school and could there possibly be no end to this process?

Ms. Epstein stated this is dependent on the particular school, what steps have been taken and other details to be worked out in the context of the particular school.

Superintendent Horne clarified, with respect to the scope of the problems a district would face, it is not likely an entire staff would be replaced but possibly a team of the principal and 5 lead

teachers may have to be reassigned. In addition, private entities have been discussed here, but another alternative provided by statute is that the Arizona Department of Education direct the operation.

Ms. Basha asked for clarification regarding the principal and 5 staff, in the example above, having a contract with the district, would they have to be relocated or absorbed within the district or terminated?

Ms. Epstein stated that depending on their contract, they could be relocated.

Ms. Basha asked if the district incurs the cost of them and the additional appointees?

Ms. Epstein stated the funding for the new staff would be from re-calculated budget limits and funds directed to the new contracted entity. Ms. Epstein stated that these were issues to be worked on.

Ms. Basha asked if the funds are there?

Ms. Epstein stated this is a school finance question and depends on the statute limits and budget limits.

Dr. Diethelm stated that basically there is a budget that is essentially the same and then the school goes into remediation. The realities are liable to be that remediation is going to take an incremental budget and there is no definition or specification or suggestion for additional funding.

Ms. Epstein added that this is correct. The legislative history sheet states that there is no anticipated impact on the general fund as a result of this legislation.

Dr. Pedicone added that this was his first question and that all of this is done within the parameters of the dollars that are coming into a particular district now. He also stated his appreciation for the Solutions Teams' efforts to recommend not moving all staff, but if they do it will be up to the districts' policies to provide for what happens to those employees. So the scope of the problem is that there is no additional revenue and the system has to take care of the process according to law.

Ms. Hilde asked what happens in the third year if the school is still underperforming with respect to budget issues, etc.

Superintendent Horne pointed out that Dr. Lewis will address the proposed timeline, but the start date is October 15 for achievement profiles, then a process which includes ADE visitation, recommendations to the State Board, hearings by the State Board, so that the actual entry by people into the schools will probably not occur until the beginning of the next school year August or September 2005. This will allow time to go to the Legislature in January to try for more money.

Ms. Hoover asked if tenure is legislative or union?

Ms. Epstein responded that it could be both but statute doesn't specifically address this issue.

Dr. Lewis stated that contract law prevails. She added that the scope is very huge. The reality of what the Arizona Department of Education and ASSIST is experiencing was presented by Mr. Parcell.

Mr. Parcell continued with slide 8 regarding the Solutions Team membership, background, training and operations, pointing out that the recommendations of the Solutions Teams are large impact decisions. By the end of this month Teams will have completed visits to 109 of the 134 underperforming schools. This includes all 81 second-year underperforming schools, 53 first-year underperforming schools with a remainder of 25 that will be visited in the first weeks of the new school year. (Please see print-out of presentation in packet)

Dr. Eugene Judson, School Effectiveness Division, Arizona Department of Education, addressed the statement of findings and what happens following a visit by a Solution Team, beginning with slide #12 in the presentation. Dr. Judson explained that the principals are interviewed after the Team has visited a school for the purpose of providing an initial evaluation, determining the extent the principal and faculty have reflected upon the Team's findings, identifying areas of

greatest needs and informing principals of next steps in the School Improvement process. In addition, they emphasize data-driven decision making, aligning curriculum, improving parent communication and asking principals what their priorities are and what assistance they may need.

Ms. Cheryl Lebo, Associate Superintendent for Teacher Quality, Arizona Department of Education, referring to slide #16, described the Best Practices Academies that are being developed and will be available to underperforming schools as well as all schools throughout the state of Arizona. In addition, they will clarify the support that is already available from the Arizona Department of Education via the web-based resource guide, shown in slides #19 and #20. The resource guide will give assistance for the leadership, curriculum and instruction, assessment and communication standards. In addition, this resource will give an overview of the process, how to align curriculum, list exemplary programs available in the state and give professional development opportunities which schools can take advantage of.

Dr. Lewis emphasized that they are working on prevention, service and coaching.

Mr. Parcell explained the coaching process where one trained school improvement coach, an employee of ADE, is assigned to offer follow up support through the Arizona School Site Improvement Support Team (ASSIST) program. After Best Practices has contacted the school and become familiar with what the school's response to its recommendations is going to be and what the school sees as its priorities, then a relationship with this one individual (coach) is established to make monthly contact with the school to support them in their ongoing efforts to improve. The coaching process includes looking at the existing school improvement plan, the recommendations of the Solutions Team, reconciling those, establishing priorities, developing an action plan and moving forward. The nature of the coach is someone on the sidelines and not directly doing school improvement at the school site to avoid over-dependence on someone to do the work for the school. This will assist the school in developing internal accountability and capacity to work with what it has to move forward.

Mr. Parcell added that the feedback to date is overwhelmingly positive with principals stating the Team has made valuable recommendations and it was helpful to have an outside group of experienced educators support what the principals have been saying already. To date, eight schools have chosen to file a written response to the findings with Phyllis Schwartz, Associate Superintendent, Arizona Department of Education, some of which included clarification of points made by the Solutions Team and in some cases findings were disputed. These responses are part of the official record of the visit.

Dr. Lewis referred again to the flow chart which outlines the information that has been presented this far and reiterated the sequence of events as they may occur within a particular school situation. Dr. Lewis introduced Mr. Alfred J. Montalbano, Deputy Associate Superintendent, State Intervention Section, Arizona Department of Education, and Ms. Tommie Miel, Education Program Administrator, State Intervention Section, Arizona Department of Education, who will be joining the team at the Arizona Department of Education.

Dr. Judson commented on other states' experiences as shown in slide #22. Based on these findings, state interventions have been very effective. In the area of achievement gains, the results are disparate. Dr. Judson cited an aggressive takeover in 1989 of the Jersey City District and today the intervention team is still in that district. However, in West Virginia, there was a high receptiveness for the state to intervene and after three years, attendance improved, third graders moved to the 69th percentile and the school moved out from the takeover. Dr. Judson noted that one large difference between these examples and Arizona's method is that those interventions were done by district, whereas in Arizona the interventions will be done by individual schools creating a potential for being more effective than what has been seen in other states.

Dr. Lewis noted that one private organization, Edison, has also worked with some schools and slide #23 depicts their gains. Dr. Lewis introduced Laverne White, from Edison, who was in attendance and available for questions from State Board members. This is the only private entity they have met with. In addition, Dr. Lewis discussed the variety of stakeholders shown in slide #24 and their involvement in these discussions. The recommendations include encouraging the Arizona Department of Education to partner with the local education agencies throughout this process. A legitimate concern has also been raised regarding aligning NCLB, corrective action and accountability formats with the AZ LEARNS accountability models. Statutory refinements are still needed to include timelines, funding needs, and the district's role as each approach is customized. The Arizona Department of Education is working with WestEd to create a matrix to include all findings of the Solutions Teams for the State Board of Education.

Dr. Diethelm commended the department for a great job and stated he is nervous that this may get too complicated. He quoted from the state education standards from a year ago which summarizes research on turning around a school: "The evidence of successful practices for turning around low performing schools is that the process demands hard work, added resources, non educational services and in-depth training and retraining of personnel in instruction and curriculum. It may mean increasing early learning opportunities by providing summer school and after school services and incentives to attract the best teachers to the most challenging schools." Dr. Diethelm stated this is straightforward and plays directly into the chart of trends presented by Dr. Lewis. Dr. Diethelm agrees with doing prevention and is nervous about the state being able to do that well. In terms of providing the data to guide instructional decisions and improve the testing and assessment systems, the way the data is available is going to change. The academy structure has to be first, but Dr. Diethelm is concerned that we need to face up to the fact that extra programs are going to be necessary. His fear is that we will have wonderful processes that can't go anywhere.

Ms. Hilde asked for clarification regarding the absence of a conscious effort to bring in parents' voices. Statistics show that 20% of parents are always involved and the parent perspective is needed.

Ms. Hoover noted that her district is one-third Native American and the tribal councils and education departments have a great influence over the schools sometimes threatening to withhold funds if they don't approve of an action taken by a school authority, i.e. suspensions, or if they are not approached by these outside entities.

Superintendent Horne stated this is high on the Arizona Department of Education's priority list as they have already been working with the Navajo Tribal Council through the Leadership Initiative and these efforts are being accelerated. The situation described by Ms. Hoover is upsetting as discipline problems are disruptive.

Ms. Hoover added this is disheartening to the teachers as well.

Superintendent Horne assured members that the Native American Advisory Group and the Discipline Task Force will be working on this problem right away.

Dr. Pedicone expressed his appreciation for Dr. Diethelm's comments and his support for the system. He stated he senses a true feeling on the part of the Arizona Department of Education to try to solve problems and not create barriers. If there is not an effort to generate more dollars to impart effective measures on schools, then another crisis within the system is created. Dr. Pedicone also reminded members that it is necessary to look at more than test scores to determine whether or not progress is being made.

Dr. Lewis stated their intention is to be supportive and not punitive and to get to the root and customize the approach for each school.

Superintendent Horne responded to Dr. Pedicone's comment stating the department is trying to get the word out as to some factors other than test scores that will influence the recommendation made to this Board. For example, schools should not narrow their curriculum to reading, writing

and math but continue in a rich program that includes social studies, science and the arts. If the curriculum is narrowed it is more likely that a harsher intervention could be recommended.

Dr. Lewis continued to outline the process of a school's reclassification process, as shown in the flow chart, to Performing, Failing To Meet Academic Standards-Moderate or Failing To Meet Academic Standards-Severe. Information on slide #28 lists the possible types of interventions.

Ms. Basha asked if this Board needs to have an understanding of the private organizations and the criteria needed.

Dr. Lewis stated that they look at which private organization would best match the findings from the evaluations gathered. An example is Edison which has a method called "Alliance" which is like a partnership approach so a good match is what they are looking for. In addition, another approach would be to provide a list of private reform organizations this Board would support and then the local school/district could choose to work with one of the listed organizations.

Ms. Bittner asked if there is a list of these organizations.

Dr. Lewis responded that there is not a list yet as they have met with only one organization to date.

Ms. Bittner recommended that because of the diversity represented in Arizona that these entities are made aware of the local culture.

Ms. Basha added that the barriers and successes need to also be known.

Dr. Pedicone stated the district should be involved in the decision of which organization will be utilized because a solution is not likely if they are not involved.

Dr. Lewis referred to slides #29 and #30 regarding the timeline for next year's activities. Site visits will begin to schools in their third year of underperforming in concert with deep document review and face-to-face meetings, hopefully developing a sense of partnership. By January the Accountability Division hopes to have information back to this Board with customized plans for the schools. Dr. Lewis stated the predominant goal is to create an exit mechanism and support the schools.

Dr. Diethelm added that in areas where the population is declining an option that he did not see in the materials today may be to close some schools.

Dr. Lewis concurred that closing a school could be an option.

B. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES AND AZ LEARNS ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE BOARD PRIOR TO THE OCTOBER 2004 PROFILE RELEASE INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

1. NCLB Updates:
 - a. 1% cap on alternate assessments
 - b. 8th grade math cut scores adjustment
 - c. Socio-Economic Status indicator
2. AZ LEARNS Updates:
 - a. 8th grade math cut score adjustment
 - b. Extended writing score adjustment
 - c. Added evidence adjustment
 - d. Reclassification of performance thresholds
 - e. Alternative rubrics for alternative schools, extremely small schools, and K-2 schools.
 - f. Other items as necessary

Dr. Donna Lewis, Associate Superintendent for Accountability, Arizona Department of Education, introduced Dr. Robert Franciosi, Education Program Administrator, Director of Accountability

Systems and Reporting, Research and Evaluation Section, Arizona Department of Education to present the NCLB and AZ LEARNS updates.

Dr. Franciosi stated there is a limit on the number of students who take the test, who may be considered proficient in terms of determining a school's AYP status. This does not limit a school's ability to test these students and does not affect their official file. This is an internal matter and if schools see themselves as over the cap they may appeal for a higher cap. The federal requirement calls for a statewide uniform system, which is being developed in terms of AYP. Updates presented concerning NCLB were:

- Application of a 1 percent cap for proficiency on alternately assessed students for AYP determinations;

Ms. Hilde asked if the third grade Math cap is 1% is a student still considered to have achieved by the Federal records but not in the State Accountability System?

Dr. Franciosi clarified that this is to determine if the state is within the NCLB 1% requirement only referring to Table 1 on page 2 of the Information Packet. (Please see materials packet)

Superintendent Horne added that schools may appeal to the Arizona Department of Education to raise the 1% classification.

Dr. Franciosi said appeals may be made by grade/by subject or by state. Overall the state is below the 1% cap and working on a strategy to appeal for an increase.

Dr. Pedicone asked if the purpose in looking at this is to determine if the state is meeting the NCLB requirements and not necessarily whether schools are going to be labeled proficient or not proficient.

Dr. Pedicone asked for clarification regarding the following statement on page 3: "Students that have a significant impact on whether a school makes AYP will be deemed proficient before students whose proficiency will have little or no impact."

Dr. Franciosi explained that they are looking at the effect of being proficient or not proficient on whether a school makes AYP, looking at various combinations of students.

- Adjustments to the 8th grade math cut scores;

Dr. Franciosi stated they do not anticipate making any changes in regard to NCLB AMOs. (Please see materials packet for details).

- The indicator for socioeconomic status is currently Title I status.

Dr. Franciosi stated NCLB requires tracking students' progress in the low socio-economic subgroup. Last year Title I status was used which had various problems. This year we will use a student's free/reduced lunch eligibility as the indicator for economically disadvantaged. At this time ADE is in the process of determining how the data will be collected for the current academic year from each school and district in the state for each individual student.

AZ LEARNS is the system where students are designated as performing or underperforming. The ADE will provide updates to the Board related to AZ LEARNS Achievement Profile calculations.

- The calculations in the profile will require modifications to the cut points for the baseline and growth groups for 8th grade math in the AZ LEARNS formula and possible modifications to the thresholds of percent of students exceeding for highly performing and excelling schools.
- The Arizona Department of Education will recommend that the extended writing scores be taken out of the added evidence component of the Achievement Profile.
- The Arizona Department of Education will propose the following actions by the State Board regarding Rubrics-Evaluations of alternative, extremely small schools, and K-2 schools:
 - Modification of the definition of alternative schools;
 - Opening the application process for alternative schools;
 - Complete development of the alternative school rubric;
 - Modification of the rubric for extremely small and K-2 schools.

Dr. Pedicone asked what effect this will have?

Superintendent Horne stated there was an emergency Board meeting last year regarding this issue as the added evidence had a tendency to increase the number of underperforming schools and taking it out of the added evidence has a tendency to decrease the number of underperforming schools and increase the significance of the measure of academic progress which under the old formula was diluted by the inclusion of the writing score in added evidence. The Superintendent stated he was sure that ultimately this will reduce the number of underperforming schools.

Dr. Franciosi stated the big task for this summer is to evaluate K-2 schools, alternative schools and extremely small schools. Until now these schools have not been evaluated under the AZ LEARNS system. A database evaluation system for this type of schools may be requested. In addition, the process of applications for alternative schools will be reopened and a revised definition for alternative schools will be requested.

Dr. Pedicone asked for clarification between a self-supporting alternative school versus a program and where do charter schools fit in?

Dr. Franciosi responded that a self-sustaining alternative school is what the definition covers including a traditional, district or charter school.

Ms. Hilde asked if a GED is considered graduation and what impact that has on those who have a GED rather than having graduated?

Superintendent Horne responded that legislation requires a student to pass state tests to graduate, so a GED cannot be considered graduation statutorily for these purposes.

Ms. Bittner commented that there are students in correctional education institutions who are about to graduate and asked if they would qualify in the alternative school district?

Dr. Franciosi responded this was correct.

Dr. Lewis informed members that Dr. Ildiko Laczko-Kerr, Deputy Associate Superintendent, Research and Evaluation, Arizona Department of Education, was not presenting today as she gave birth to a daughter on May 11, 2004.

Ms. Farley asked for a timeframe as to when the Board should act on the AZ LEARNS initiative.

Dr. Franciosi stated the goal is August.

The Board took a brief break at 11:05AM and re-convened at 11:35AM

C. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE CERTIFICATION TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS.

Ms. Kathy Wiebke, Deputy Associate Superintendent for Highly Qualified Professionals, Arizona Department of Education presented the work of the Certification Task Force. Ms Wiebke gave recognition to Margaret Garcia Dugan, Associate Superintendent of Academic Achievement, Arizona Department of Education, Jan Pentek, Director of Certification, Arizona Department of Education, Ms. Patty Hardy, Supervisor of Certification Specialists, Arizona Department of Education, many of the other personnel in the Certification Unit, Arizona Department of Education, Julie Gasaway, and others who facilitated the dialogues and introduced Melanie Paris who has recently joined the staff. In addition, Ms. Wiebke publicly thanked Board member, Ms. Hilde, as she attended every Certification Task Force meeting going above and beyond the call of duty in terms of helping to facilitate some difficult conversations.

Ms. Wiebke gave an update as to the membership and activities of the Certification Task Force by way of a PowerPoint presentation. (See copy of presentation in packet of materials) Five areas of focus have been identified:

- Administrative Certificates

Dr. Pedicone asked for clarification regarding Option B, which does not require teaching experience but still requires a principal's certificate, which requires teaching experience. Ms. Wiebke explained that the requirement for teaching experience may be removed. The conversation centers around whether there is a need for teaching experience for a superintendent's certificate.

Dr. Pedicone asked for a summary of the argument in favor of eliminating the requirement. Ms. Wiebke explained the conversation centered around a scenario of a district business manager who possibly wanted to be superintendent, and in that business manager's executive team or cabinet there were already people who had that teaching experience, the conversation was that the superintendent wouldn't necessarily need it if he/she is surrounded with people who have that expertise. This was also heard in reference to a person with a strong finance, business or leadership background but might not necessarily have been a teacher. In response to Ms. Basha's question regarding which side of the argument would be best, Ms. Wiebke stated that the leader of the school district would have teaching experience and curriculum background. Ms. Hilde added that this is almost a district size issue because in a small district, the teaching experience is crucial since there are not assistants. In her experience to date, there is not a shortage of superintendents, but her concern is at the principal level where there seems to be a smaller pool of available candidates. Ms. Wiebke added that all information received by this Board to date is draft language.

Dr. Pedicone commented on the superintendent requirements stating that instructional leadership needs to be there.

Ms. Basha likened this issue to the private sector in that the best run companies have someone at the top who knows all aspects of the business.

- Alternative Paths

Ms. Wiebke reviewed the current draft. (See presentation slides in packet) Ms. Hilde added that this is not a quick, easy way to become a teacher. Fees will be significant because there is no outside pool of money to pay for this program. Ultimately candidates will be responsible. Ms. Hilde has spoken to three county superintendents who are ready and willing to provide the assistance under this option understanding that fees are a component. Ms. Hilde is not sure she believes in the process, but also believes it is doable with significant costs at least as expensive as going back to the university.

Ms. Farley added that State Board approval will be required in adding to the certification process and fees are a big area of the conversations to date. Statutory changes would also be necessary to implement this kind of program.

- Certificate Renewals

Ms. Bittner asked what it would entail in having county superintendents verify certificates. Ms. Wiebke sees a local school district probably being the verifier, but for those who are perhaps on leave or not in classrooms, they could have their professional development plan reviewed locally by the county superintendent instead of coming to the Arizona Department of Education. This is not meant to be cumbersome and Ms. Wiebke hopes to be working more closely with the county superintendents offices. Ms. Bittner stated that some county superintendents do not have sufficient staff to handle the extra workload and it is important to keep the dialogue open in the development of this process.

- Reciprocity

Ms. Hilde commented regarding "passing scores" and in terms of aligning our teacher standards to out of state tests because if ours are that important we ought to see that they align with the other tests. Also cut scores need to be considered and how will they be judged? For instance, Texas takes our teachers but requires a higher score on the AEPA than we do.

- Tiered Licensure

Ms. Farley added that last summer emergency rulemaking was done in regard to teacher certification. One of the primary issues was the performance assessment and in order to be eligible to move from a provisional to standard certificate, performance assessments is required in Board Rule but has never been implemented. There are a lot of details in implementation including what is the cost and the committee needs to re-convene and draft language by the end of this summer for the Board in order to move forward. Dr. Diethelm suggested that as the rulemaking goes forward, the definition of performance assessment should be more clear, how it is measured and should the principal's job include assessing a teacher's performance? As a businessman he believes it is the principal's job to do performance assessments of their teachers.

Ms. Wiebke stated that the Certification Task Force would like to consider working over the summer to draft rule language for the Board's consideration on administrative certificates, alternative paths, certificate renewal and reciprocity and then re-convene the sub-committee to examine the options of the performance assessment with a possible RFP. Staff is currently working on the performance assessment piece in terms of research. In addition, areas for future discussions will include:

- Revisit the Arizona Professional Administrative Standards
- Adopt Professional Development Standards
- Coursework requirements for Teacher Preparation Programs
- Statewide Induction Programs and the establishment of Induction Standards

Ms. Wiebke quoted Linda Darling Hammond, "Teacher expertise is the most important factor in determining student achievement."

Dr. Pedicone asked if there was discussion surrounding the advantages of the tiered certificates?

Ms. Wiebke responded that from her own practical experience it provides a level to work toward, something more to aspire to and give them a different goal. Not everyone would want to do this but there are teachers that would. In addition, this would give the ability to capitalize on the Master Teacher leaders in other areas.

Ms. Farley suggested there should be some type of recognition for those who achieve these additional levels.

Ms. Bittner expressed her appreciation for the work of the Task Force and the many people who have been involved in the process.

Mr. John Wright, Vice President, Arizona Education Association, addressed the Board making the following observations:

- Appreciation for the work of the Task Force and its leadership;
- Quality management – if it isn't broke, don't fix it; and
- Form follows function

Potential changes should be based on identified need. Structure should be changed based on what you want. Identify and reduce barriers and address concerns based on desired outcomes. Mr. Wright challenged the Board by stating that criteria, standards and processes to insure those standards are in place to demonstrate quality, knowledge and skills of teachers. He stated that certification requirements should not be changed based on shortage and asked the Board to look at these issues and keep the function of the state and district in mind. He added that the reason district administrators are not evaluating a teacher for certification is because they are not the licensing or certifying agent that has been charged by the state to determine quality. Mr. Wright reiterated the cautions expressed to the Board as making sure we are not fixing something that is working or if it is not working, to understand what the desired outcome is and design the process and criteria to achieve that outcome.

Superintendent Horne added that there is a need for Alternative Certification because the data shows a teacher shortage and that presents a quality problem. The problem happens when schools have no one to choose from in the hiring process. The state has a serious problem in the lack of high quality teachers.

Advocacy must be made for:

- Higher salaries,
- Support teachers better in discipline,
- Mentoring programs,
- Teacher preparation programs, and
- Encourage good teachers to become better.

Regarding reciprocity, Superintendent Horne stated there are very highly qualified teachers coming to this state who get frustrated because it takes a long time before they can start teaching. There is no need for that. With the reforms proposed a highly qualified teacher, aside from the fingerprint card, is ready to go right into the classroom. Mr. Horne stated the Certification Task Force has done a fantastic job of working on the creation of the alternative program and that this will be important in increasing academic standards.

Ms. Farley stated that the next steps regarding certification are to formally open the docket at the next Board meeting on Monday, May 24, 200 at the State Capitol, Executive Tower, Second Floor Conference Room. There will not be language adopted at this time, but rather this will simply provide the public with notice that certification reforms are under discussion.

Motion to adjourn by Dr. Diethelm. Seconded by Ms. Bittner. *Motion passes.*

Meeting adjourned at 11:35AM.